

VZCZCXR07657  
PP RUEHDE RUEHDH RUEHDIR  
DE RUEHMK #0149 0711426

ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 121426Z MAR 09  
FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8530  
INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RHBVAKS/COMUSNAVCENT PRIORITY  
RHMFIU/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY

UNCLAS MANAMA 000149

SIPDIS  
SENSITIVE

BAGHDAD FOR AMBASSADOR ERELI

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV ASEC PHUM KISL BA

SUBJECT: HAQ SUPPORTERS TARGET SOUTH ASIANS

REF: A. MANAMA 57  
1B. MANAMA 50  
1C. 08 MANAMA 845  
1D. 08 MANAMA 593

11. (U) Summary: Small bands of youth continue to skirmish with police in Shia villages, protesting the detention of two Shia Haq Movement activists. In a new development, some of these youth have attacked South Asians. End summary.

12. (U) Over the past week, several bands of 10-20 Shia youth have come out every night to throw rocks and Molotov cocktails at police, protesting the continued detention of Haq activists Hassan Musheima and Mohamed Habib Maqdad. Usually, there are no injuries or arrests during these clashes, and have little effect on life in Bahrain outside the villages concerned. However, during this week's disturbances four south Asians were attacked in separate incidents in the Shia villages of Ma'ameer, Bani Jamrah, and Dain. In the most serious of these, masked youth in Ma'ameer threw a Molotov cocktail at a vehicle and set it blaze. The Pakistani driver suffered burns over forty percent of his body and is in critical condition. Two men have been arrested in connection with the attack. In Bani Jamrah, several youth beat two south Asian passers-by, while in Dain attackers singled out a south Asian food deliveryman.

13. (U) One local paper reported that the Pakistani victim in Ma'ameer was a plain-clothes policeman, then retracted the report after a pointed denial from the Ministry of Interior. Shia contacts speculate that the attackers believed that the victim was an undercover policeman, or at least connected to the security apparatus, and so targeted him specifically. The Bani Jamrah and Dain attacks appear to have been ethnically motivated. Temporary foreign workers constitute half of Bahrain's population; most of these foreigners are from south Asia. Most of the riot police with whom radical youth fight on weekends are Pakistanis.

14. (SBU) Wifaq, the mainstream Shia opposition party, has condemned the attacks, noting that Islam forbids attacking "outsiders" in the community. At the same time, Wifaq opposes what it claims is a government program to recruit and naturalize Sunnis from abroad.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Visit Embassy Manama's Classified Website:

<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/manama/>

\*\*\*\*\*  
HENZEL